

ELKES Dove Tales

The newsletter of Elkes Biscuits

Number 9 Spring 1994

Warehouse move turns into opportunity

FACED with the prospect of having to install sprinklers as a fire precaution throughout the factory (because of the value of finished stock in the existing warehouse), Elkes Biscuits has decided to 'bite the bullet' and move the warehouse instead.

"The stock in our Uttoxeter warehouse is worth over £1 million," explained Financial Controller Norman Hiscock. "It's the size of this risk, rather than anything else, which makes our insurers nervous. Fitting sprinklers everywhere would cost at least £1 million, for which we would get no return."

During the next six months the company is to run trials of new fogging units, special sprinklers developed to douse fires on oil rigs and on ships at sea. By fitting these units at the end of each oven, the com-



Studying plans for a new warehouse are (left to right) Graham Halton, Gordon McGlone and Peter Booth

pany is confident it can deal with the risk of fire in a more cost-effective way.

The decision to move the warehouse is also intended to improve safety for everyone on the Uttoxeter site because it will mean much less traffic and far fewer lorries parked on site.

The Uttoxeter finished goods warehouse, together with the export warehouse at Fauld, can hold about 4000 pallets. However, there have been many times in the past six

months when this has not been enough, so any increase in storage capacity would help. Bringing both warehouses together under one roof would also be more efficient.

Elkes is now looking carefully at the best way to run a combined offsite operation and has identified three possible options: the company could buy or lease a warehouse (keeping operational control) or appoint an outside distributor to run the warehouse operation on its behalf.

Paramount to maintain excellent service levels

Whichever option is chosen, Commercial Director Gordon McGlone has made it clear to the 30 people employed in the existing warehousing operations that the company is anxious to avoid redundancies.

"Also paramount in our minds is the need to maintain our excellent service level, which has helped to build our business," he commented.

It will be 1995 before any move takes place and the company can take full advantage of the new space created.

IMPROVE

"We are already looking at a long term plan to move Creams into the warehouse area, once it has been redeveloped," Managing Director Stuart Kennedy told *Dove Tales*.

"By having more space internally we can improve plant layouts and with more space externally we can ease car parking congestion.

"But first we have to decide where the new warehouse will be!"

That decision is likely to be made within the next three months.



Inside this issue

- ◆ Amenity block update — page 2
- ◆ Meet Sam, the amazing rabbit. Details on page 5
- ◆ New look for Malted Milk—page 7

View Point



Seeing things in a different light

“I get concerned when people say to me that they hear conflicting views of how the company is doing, depending on who is giving the message and when it's being given.

If it's in *Dove Tales*, we're usually doing fine ... if it's in negotiations, we're usually up against it .. and so on.

My greatest concern is that there seems to be an assumption that someone is setting out to mislead. I have no time for innuendo or people who deliberately mislead, whose trade is in half-truths and suspicion.

If we are to deal with issues quickly and effectively, we need to understand each other and that means we must all be as truthful as possible.

Whatever your position in the company or whatever the issue, consider whether the information you communicate describes the real situation as best it can. Of course, we all need to accept that our own view of any situation is likely to have some built-in prejudices — others may see things in a very different light — and it's often somewhere in the differences of opinion that the real solution lies.

Such differences of opinion arise for all sorts of reasons: someone's looking at how we did last year, someone's looking forward to how we should do next year, someone's a pessimist, someone's an

optimist, someone forgot to tell you they'd changed something, and so on. Getting to the bottom of the reasons for the differences is usually helpful all round.

Now let me tell you my view of how things are. I'm very conscious that, although I have a lot of general information, you will know more about how things are in your area than I do.

I genuinely believe that we're running into what could be a very successful period in the Elkes story. I've no idea just how successful and for how long — it could be a two-month wonder, it could be for two years or longer.

SUCCESSSES

And what makes me think this way? Well, many signs on many fronts, with the momentum starting to build earlier this year.

There have been some real sales successes — in particular new chocolate countline business and new lines into Sainsbury. And there's more to come over the next few months.

We've also seen some real progress on production efficiencies in the last two months. Again, one swallow doesn't make a summer, but I believe we're making genuine progress in building on a better understanding of how to achieve improved performances. Many people, at all levels, are contributing to this improvement and I do appreciate their efforts.

COMPETITION

But I shouldn't finish without giving you another view — this time looking backwards over 1993.

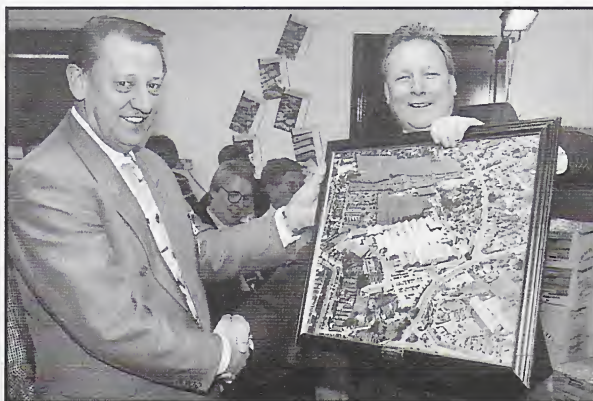
Last year was an extremely difficult one for many people and, perhaps most of all, for production supervision who have had to cope with a complete reorganisation. And it's been anything but a piece of cake for sales; with all the competition between shops meaning virtually no price increases, we've had to sell more just to stand still.

So there you have it: two realistic views of where we stand. I'm very hopeful, but also very aware of how quickly things can change. What I can be certain of is that a successful future for Elkes depends on us all continuing to develop our understanding of other people's views.”

Stuart Kennedy

Returning the favour

WITH Norway having recently hosted the winter Olympics, it was Elkes' turn to return the favour — though admittedly on a rather smaller scale! — by welcoming 45 Norwegian wholesalers to Uttoxeter. The visit to the factory was part of a tour of key suppliers in Britain, France and Denmark and was led by Poul Hoffmann, the head of Elkes' Norwegian agent Scandia Kaker, and his wife Elaine.



Stuart Kennedy presents Poul Hoffmann with a 'souvenir' of his visit to Elkes

AMENITY BLOCK UPDATE

PROGRESS on the new amenity block has been delayed by bad weather. It is now expected to be ready for use in June.

The building itself is already complete and, as we go to press, work is concentrating on fitting out the inside.

The amenity block will provide employees with new toilets (complete with showers), locker rooms, laundry room, smoking and non-smoking rest rooms and three meeting rooms.

Once the new building is in use, the walls of the existing gents' toilets and locker rooms will be knocked down to extend the



The shape of things to come: the new amenity block nears completion

factory. This extra space will house a new Cavanna wrapping machine which is scheduled to be installed in August as part of a £825,000 countline investment project.

WORLD FIRST . . . and Elkes is really wrapped!

RECENT months have seen around £600,000 invested in new equipment for the factory.

Late last year, Elkes achieved a world first when it had a new £200,000 wrapping machine installed.

Made by the Swiss company SIG, whose machines are often described as the 'Rolls Royces of packaging machinery', is a prototype which has been specially designed for the biscuit industry of today.

Now fully operational, though constantly being developed because it is so new, the new wrapping machine is proving both reliable and fast to changeover.

Its biggest advantage is its speed: it is faster than its established competitor, wrapping 80 packets of ginger nuts or round shorties a minute (compared with the 50 handled by the machine it has replaced).

It is more computer oriented, too. To changeover from one product to another, you make a change on the computer which alters several settings and the remaining manual changes are designed to be fewer than on previous machines.

Computers play an important part, too, in a new system for grinding, weighing and distributing sugar (granulated, coarse pulverised and icing) which was installed in March. It is scheduled to be fully up and running by late April.

Its installation — linked up to existing systems for handling flour, fat, malt and syrup — is the latest step in the company's long term plan to automate all bulk ingredients.

The £250,000 sugar handling system will process three tons of sugar an hour, twice the quantity dealt with by the current mill and bagging machine.

Other advantages of the new system

SPECIAL REPORT

are its improved dust control, reduced manual handling, accuracy and weighing capabilities.

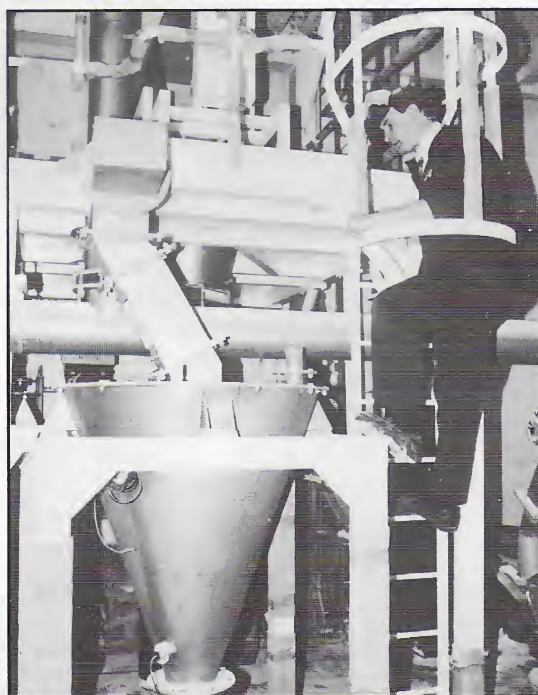
And because sugar will be milled to a coarser size and then sieved (rather than being ground to a fine size in the first place) this will not only increase throughput but also reduce the temperature of the sugar (important for creams).

The system has been manufactured in the UK by Braby Fuller, formerly Kemutec.

Project Engineering Manager Graham Halton has headed up the sugar handling project team of Senior Project Engineer Lindsay Hayes, Project Technician Gary Appleby and Raw Materials & Mixing Manager Les Alderson.

Finally, as we go to press, a new bagging machine is about to be installed in the Overwrapping area.

For those in the know, the £150,000



Gary Appleby inspects the new sugar hopper

equipment consists of a flighted conveyor which, via a bucket elevator, feeds a Yamato-Lock multi-head weigher above a Sandicare bagging machine.

Initially intended to handle 500g packs of ginger nuts for Tesco, the machine has potential to bag countlines, too.

Such good vibrations?

ELKES is believed to be the first company in Northern Foods to have replaced a manual system of testing machine vibration with a new computerised system.

A small box — also used for testing motors, gearboxes and engines — can be carried around the factory and test more machines than its predecessor could tackle. Its computer software is linked to the existing network.

The idea behind the tests is that more vibration than normal indicates a problem. It is, of course, better to detect that problem before it actually gets bad enough for the machine to fail and production be halted.

"Anything resonates at a frequency," explained Technical Supervisor Dave Wymark. "This equipment takes around six readings, plots the deterioration, and gives an indication of when the machine will fail."



Keith Tebbitt uses the new vibration testing equipment

The new equipment has only been in use since February yet has already scored some success in reducing downtime: for example, highlighting a problem with an air compressor meant that it could be repaired over a weekend without interrupting production.

IT'S OVER TO YOU

WE HAVEN'T been exactly knocked down in the rush of people volunteering to become *Dove Tales* correspondents!

Accounts' Rob Mincher and Purchasing's Kerry Degg are still working in glorious isolation, keeping us up-to-date with office news. But what about the factory?

If you've any ideas for stories for future issues of *Dove Tales*, please drop us a note in the postbox — incidentally, due to popular demand, it has been moved to a new home just outside the canteen — or write to:

Liz Wright,
Editor,
West Meadow, Bell Lane,
Lower Broadheath,
Worcester, WR2 6RR.

Training times

TRAINING Officer Marion Speed is certainly being kept busy as a variety of training initiatives gets underway.

Here are just some of the early highlights of the 1994 programme:

TEAM BUILDING

Supervisors and Team Leaders from Chocolate, Plains, Raws, Farleys, Creams and Engineering have all recently attended 1½-day team building sessions.

Quality Assurance and Hygiene are set to follow, as we go to press.

Often affectionately referred to as 'away days', the sessions themselves have proved quite a feat as complete departments are taken off site for the first time.

The aim is to build departmental togetherness — giving people a better understanding of working as part of a team — as well as to focus on developing an action plan for tackling specific issues.

Marion told *Dove Tales* that the sessions also give people an insight into the company's objectives and how, for example, targets for sales or production variances are devised.

TEAM LEADER TRAINING

Helping prepare tomorrow's managers today is a new training programme which has been developed for potential Team Leaders.

The objectives of the training programme are to give people a knowledge of the factory and processes in each area,



Deborah Bolton leads a PSD session

Trying a new approach

basic management experience through on-the-job training and the skills to enable them to handle any paperwork.

The four-month programme is tailor-made for each person because some are more experienced in some areas than others. Each trainee works closely with a Departmental Manager, meeting once a week to discuss progress.

Jenny Wildman is the first of three would-be Team Leaders to begin this new training programme.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Elkes is trying a new approach to solving problems.

Problem Solving Discipline (PSD) is the name of a technique which identifies the causes of problems in their simplest terms before a decision is taken on how to solve them permanently.

Factory Manager Deborah Bolton has launched the scheme in the factory, look-



Would-be Team Leader Myra Wilson (left) is given some practical help by Mary Hall

ing at solving problems which generate waste.

Leading the way is a team from Chocolate made up of Anne Travis, Chaz Doherty, Penny Fields, Sharon Bloor, Carol McFarlane, Phil Cooper, Dave Rogers and Rebecca Crooks.

Presuming the approach is successful, it will be extended to other areas of the factory during the year.

The same approach is being used with multi-disciplinary project teams in other areas, tackling eight systems problems; this effort is being spearheaded by Financial Controller Norman Hiscock.

Building departmental togetherness

NORTHERN Foods has had an equal opportunities policy since 1985; yet figures show that women, minority ethnic and disabled people are still proportionately under-represented at all levels of management and supervision.

This equal opportunities policy consists of a set of standards for all companies within Northern Foods to work towards. These include:

- how employees should be recruited
- how pregnant employees should be treated
- how employees suffering harassment can be helped

➤ how all employees should be encouraged to develop their potential

As part of its determination to become a fair employer, Northern has been running one-day workshops for managers throughout the Group.

More than 40 Elkes managers have attended one of these workshops, which covered different aspects of equal opportunities in employment and highlighted how to identify any discriminatory barriers which may exist at the Uttoxeter site.

Plans are now afoot to extend the training to other groups of employees at Elkes, and to establish a number of initiatives targeting specific issues.



FAIR FOR ALL



Chris is up, up and away!

IN JANUARY, Elkes said goodbye to Senior Personnel Officer Chris Downie.

Then a mother of young children, Chris joined the company 12 years ago as a biscuit packer. After six months she moved out of the factory and spent almost the next six years working part-time on reception.

In 1988 she moved into Personnel, initially as Personnel Assistant before being promoted to Personnel Officer and finally Senior Personnel Officer, her most recent post.

AWARDED

In 1992, after four years' part-time study at Stoke Management Centre, she was awarded her Institute of Personnel Management professional diploma.

But Personnel was, in fact, Chris' second career: she left school at 16 to go to college and train to be a teacher.

Once qualified, she taught nursery age children in primary schools, but later also went on to gain a primary teaching diploma to allow her to teach children up to the age of nine.

You could perhaps say, then, that Chris' move from teaching to Personnel was simply a matter of changing from little people to big people!

Now Chris has been promoted again and has left Elkes to join another Northern



Chris seeks 'divine intervention' on her last day at Elkes!

Foods company, NFT, as Personnel Manager based at Alferton, Derbyshire.

In her new job she is looking after 500 employees at NFT's distribution depots at Manchester, Bristol, Penrith, Whitefield and Alferton itself.

"My work at Elkes has given me a good grounding," commented Chris before she left, "and lots of 'hands on' Personnel experience."

"I have also made some good friends here and I will certainly be keeping in touch."

We wish Chris every success in her new job.



High-flying Chris on holiday in Cyprus

Meet Sam, the amazing rabbit



Jenny Whittaker panders to Sam's love of digestive biscuits

OVER the years, 'That's Life' TV presenter Esther Rantzen has brought a variety of talented pets to the attention of the unsuspecting British public.

But did you know that Elkes has its very own animal star, waiting patiently in the sidelines to become famous?

Sam is an extremely intelligent, dwarf lop-eared rabbit who lives with Customer Services Clerk Jenny Whittaker and her husband Karl.

The couple have had Sam for almost two years, ever since he was a baby. He has grown into a friendly animal who enjoys playing in the garden — neighbours have confused him with a dog and a cat — and eating digestive biscuits.

Digestive biscuits? Yes, Sam likes nothing better than to start the day with a

rabbit

digestive (made by Elkes, of course!); although he is developing a taste for chocolates, no other biscuit will really do.

In fact, he is so keen on digestives that at breakfast time he will often get up on his hind legs and walk towards Jenny or Karl if they haven't already produced a biscuit for him.

Sam is certainly something special: as well as his discerning tastes, he is even happy to let Jenny bath him in the sink and then dry him off with a hairdryer afterwards!

Incidentally, Sam isn't the only pet in the Whittaker household. Jenny and Karl also have two chipmunks called Teal and Sable ... and Sable has just had babies.

NOT NICE?

A NEWSPAPER has reported the strange story of a Birmingham man who was refused entry to a nightclub — because he was carrying a packet of biscuits in his pocket!

Rob Mason said bouncers refused to let him in when they discovered the packet of Elkes Nice biscuits.

"What do they think I was going to do with them?" said Mr Mason. "They could hardly be called an offensive weapon — they'd just crumble."

After an hour he was allowed in, but only after the biscuits had been confiscated.



Carol Chadwick



Elaine Clarke and Carl Bennett



Barry Turner



'Mr Blobby' helps Stuart Kennedy celebrate his half-century!

People making the news

■ Carol Chadwick has succeeded Chris Downie as Senior Personnel Officer.

Originally from Bury, Carol's career began in Stockport Council's Environmental Health Department where she held a variety of clerical positions before being appointed Trainee Personnel Officer.

She then joined Robert McBride's, a Manchester bleach and detergent manufacturer, as Personnel Officer.

In January 1991 she was appointed Assistant Personnel Manager of Matteson Walls. Two months later the company was taken over by Northern Foods and became Trafford Park Bakery.

Before joining Elkes, Carol had been working on secondment at Eden Vale, Cuddington.

Carol is married with one cat! Away from work she enjoys walking and gardening.

■ Creams Department Manager Marion McPhee has left Elkes to take up the post

of Line Manager with Pork Farms in Nottingham.

Quality Assurance Manager Carol Walker is currently on secondment in Creams until Marion's successor is appointed.

■ Also off to pastures new — but rather further afield — is Assistant Personnel Officer Louise Joynes.

Louise, who has only ever worked for Elkes, has taken a six-months job with an American family to look after a millionaire's four children aged between four and 12.

During her stay 'stateside' she will spend time in Long Island, Washington and New Orleans.

■ Congratulations to everyone who has recently celebrated one of 'those' birthdays: they include Stuart Kennedy and Ivor Tomlinson (50) and Les Alderson (40).

■ A former officer in Derbyshire Police,

Barry Turner has joined Elkes as new Security Team Leader.

■ Congratulations to all proud new mums and dads. They include Janette Barnett (twin daughters), Deborah Hall (twin sons), Gail Chatfield (son Alex), Nicola Holmes (son Jacob) and Kay Hudson.

■ At the end of April, Graduate Trainee Marcella Ceraola joins Elkes in a production role.

■ Congratulations to Chris Allen and Caroline Hudson on their recent wedding.

■ Congratulations to Financial Accountant Elaine Clarke on passing her Chartered Institute of Management Accountants final exams. On the way to becoming fully qualified, too, is Trainee Accountant Carl Bennett who has passed his Stage Two CIMA exams.

■ The things some people will do for charity!

Last autumn, Fork Lift Truck Driver Stuart Young shaved his head and raised £100 towards a chairlift for a young cystic fibrosis sufferer. Meanwhile, Sally Johnson, National Accounts Sales and Marketing Assistant, raised a similar amount for Cancer Research by swimming more than three miles at Uttoxeter Leisure Centre.

■ Specifications Clerk Sheila Gains has made a name for herself as a fine dressmaker. Now she's tackling a real first by making her own wedding dress, which she'll wear when she walks down the aisle of Uttoxeter's Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church on 7 May. We wish Sheila and fiancé David Hodgkinson a very happy day.

■ Congratulations to Bakery Operative Barbara Gallagher who has retired after working for the company for 19 years.

■ An incredible 31 years ahead of Barbara is Hygiene Manager Cyril Ashmore who has recently celebrated reaching a half century with Elkes! Our congratulations to him.

KEEPING HEALTH IN SIGHT!

AS ANNOUNCED in the last issue of *Dove Tales*, Elkes has spent £1,500 on equipment so that it can provide regular eye sight checks for its VDU Operators and Fork Lift Truck Drivers.

The checks — which are voluntary — take about 10 minutes and are completely painless, according to the company's own Occupational Health team who carry them out.

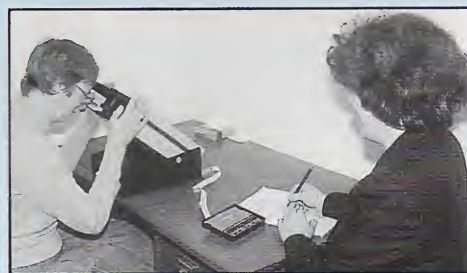
"If we pick up something, we refer that person to an optician of his or her choice for a more detailed test," explained Cathy Wyatt.

It is hoped to extend the eye screening programme to all employees later in the year.

As we go to press, Cathy is waiting to see how much money has been raised for the charity Feed The Children by employees giving up smoking.

The sponsored 'stop smoking' began, appropriately enough, on No Smoking Day (9 March) and lasted a month.

Incidentally, for anyone trying to kick the habit, the Occupational Health Department can supply three strengths of nicotine patches which



Barbara Grindon has her eye sight checked by Cathy Wyatt

are still on sale at a special price.

Looking ahead to May — 17 and 18, to be precise — Elkes will be joining forces with the local Health Promotion Unit to make people more aware of skin cancer. Watch out for more details.

And if you can think as far ahead as October, and would be willing to donate a pint of blood, Cathy would be delighted to hear from you. She's looking for 150 names from the day shift — thanks to everyone who's volunteered so far.

New look for Malted Milk

MALTED Milk, the biscuits for which Elkes is best known, has been given a bright new look.

The re-designed packs bring together 'something old and something new': new are the tempting illustrations of the biscuits themselves, complemented by the familiar cow logo highlighting that Elkes' is the original brand.

The packaging material itself is new, too, now using extra glossy film to give the packs more impact on shelf.

"Malted Milk was established in 1936 and today is the brand leader," Marketing Manager Clare Brady told *Dove Tales*.

"We have redesigned the packs to win back customers who used to buy Malted Milk biscuits or who used to enjoy them when they were children.

"The message we want to get across is that Malted Milk is a family favourite, as good today as it's ever been."

The new look extends to all three Malted

Milk varieties: Malted Milk, Chocolate Malted Milk and Malted Milk Creams.

Malted Milk is undoubtedly a success story that will continue to run and run.

The close working relationship between Elkes and Sainsbury is proving particularly good news, too, with several new products being developed.

Last autumn, Sainsbury's Lemon Thins and Almond Thins were launched. Their success was followed up by the arrival of Ginger Crinkle and Coconut Crinkle at the end of January. Sales of these four new products alone are estimated to be worth more than £1 million to Elkes.

More recently, in mid-March, the first packs

of Sainsbury half-coated Ginger Crinkle left the factory with Malted Milk Creams about to follow, as we go to press.

Four or five more new Sainsbury products are set to be launched before the autumn. Watch out for plates of samples to try in the canteen!

Despite all this activity on the Sainsbury front, Elkes is far from neglecting its other customers: in April, Nice Creams and half-coated Shortcake start to appear in Safeway stores; this summer, a range of five cream biscuits is to be launched under the Tesco brand name; and later this year two new half-coated lines will be launched under the Waitrose name.

'As good today as it's ever been'



Pictured at Elkes' exhibition stand at Cologne are (from left) Gordon McGlone, Bent Jakobsen and Annette Schang (NAF International, agent for Sweden), Bob MacGregor and Lord Howe, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for MAFF

Export round-up

Germany

The city of Cologne was again the setting for the annual International Sweets and Biscuit Fair.

Elkes, one of 1200 exhibitors, used the event to promote its complete biscuit range with Malted Milk and Shortcake taking centre stage.

Commercial Director Gordon McGlone, Export Manager Bob MacGregor and Marketing Manager Clare Brady met about 20 of Elkes' existing customers and also made over 30 new contacts.

Scandinavia

Scandinavia has overtaken Ireland as Elkes' biggest export market.

To help exploit the sales potential there, plans are afoot to create special packaging for customers in Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

Greece

Elkes has recently begun exporting biscuit crumb to Greece. The digestive-type crumb is being used as a cheesecake base and is packed in 25kg bags.

A similar product is already exported to Holland and Germany.

Russia

Russia is one of the latest overseas countries to sell Elkes' biscuits.

Cream Sandwich biscuits — 150g and 300g packs — are proving particularly popular.

Spot the misfit — and win a prize!

NOW here's a competition which couldn't be easier: a crossword with all the answers already provided!

All you have to do is match the words given with the spaces shown on the grid. We've already put one word in place just to help you get started.

But one word will not fit! When you have found out which one it is, fill in the entry form below and pop it in the *Dove Tales* postbox or

post it to Liz Wright, Editor, West Meadow, Bell Lane, Lower Broadheath, Worcester WR2 6RR

If yours is one of the first five correct entries picked out of the hat after our closing date — Friday, 3 June — you will find a £20 prize on its way to you.

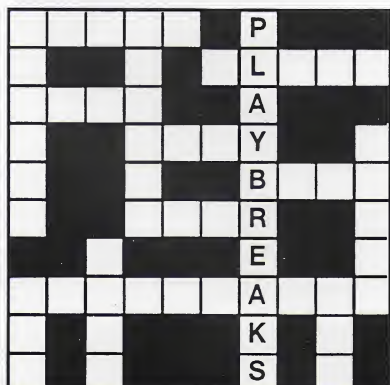
CAR, EAT, OVAL, DOOR,

SOON, TRAY, BAKE,

CLIMB, ELKES, EATEN,

TEAMS, COOKER, MALTED,

CHOCOLATES, PLAYBREAKS



ENTRY FORM

Name

Department

Missing word

Congratulations

THE COMPETITION in our last issue was a tough one, with not too many of you managing to identify correctly our beautiful babies!

All the more congratulations, then, to our five winners. Sharing the £100 prize money are Clare Brady, John MacIntyre, Peter Naughton, Joanne Capewell and Teresa Oultram.

Incidentally, the babies were Marion McPhee, Ray Smith, Graham Halton and Cathy Wyatt.

Ben leads out the team

HEATHER Duff's eight-year-old son Ben has been football mad since he was a toddler; so he was absolutely thrilled to be chosen as a mascot by his favourite team, Sheffield Wednesday.

According to Heather, who works in Production Planning, Ben picked up his interest in football from his father, Anthony, who manages a local team.

But while Dad is a dedicated Wolves supporter, Ben chose to follow the same club as his cousins.

He is a member of Wednesday's Junior Owls Club which, among other things, means that his name goes into the draw to be a mascot before each match.

"He was really pleased when he was chosen," Heather told *Dove Tales*. "I think his cousins were a bit jealous, because they've been in the Club for years and have never been picked."

Ben was mascot for a match against Chelsea at their home

**As they say —
'the boy
done well'!**

ground of Stamford Bridge. Mum, Dad and sister Daniella (11) all travelled down with him to London to watch the game.

"He was on the pitch for half an hour with the Chelsea mascot and then another half an hour while he was introduced to the players from both teams before he led Sheffield Wednesday out onto the pitch," said Heather.

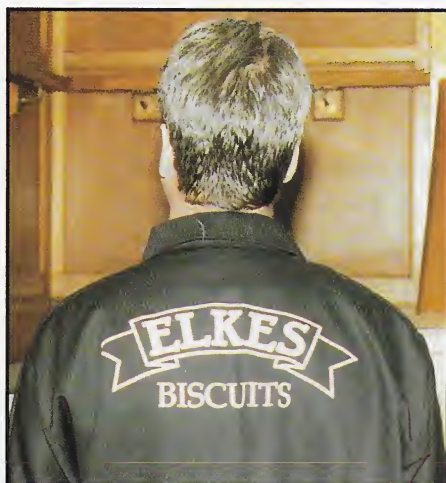
Meeting the Chelsea players was one thing, but apparently meeting his heroes from Sheffield Wednesday left Ben "completely overawed".

The game turned out to be a 1-1 draw, although Chelsea later won the rematch.

But defeat certainly hasn't put Ben off his love of football: recently he was picked as captain of his school team.



A day he'll never forget: mascot Ben Duff is pictured with one of his heroes, Sheffield Wednesday's Graham Hyde



Helping out

RECENT months have seen Elkes lend a helping hand to two groups of local footballers:

- a £250 cheque was presented to Uttoxeter Juniors Football Club as a contribution to the youngsters' Easter trip to Spain.
- sweatshirts bearing the Elkes logo were given to Uttoxeter Football Club (an amateur Saturday side).

Left: Elkes, quite literally, backing Uttoxeter Football Club!

On the social scene

LOOKING ahead to the summer, Elkes is to host two of Northern Foods' other sporting competitions.

On 5 June, Uttoxeter is the venue for the Bowls Singles Competition while the Doubles Competition will be held at Elkes on 3 July.

On the social front, the following acts have been booked to appear at the Elkes Sports, Social and Welfare Club over the next few months:

23 April	Steve Jay
7 May	Christine Dee
23 May	John Anderson
4 June	Peter Webster
18 June	Yvonne Collette
2 July	Tony Ross
16 July	Johnny Summers
30 July	Ron Jones
13 August	Alan Gibson
27 August	Bobby King

FOOTBALL HEROES

CONGRATULATIONS to Elkes' footballers — Steve Metcalfe, Dave Tomkinson, Dave Rogers, Paul Winandy, Bob Stevenson, Tony Greenaway, Steve Parkes, Paul Croft, Tony Wharton, Anthony Ratcliffe, Steve Lowndes and substitutes Simon Pritchard, Dave Whittaker, Pat Clinton and Kishore Sharma — on winning through to the semifinal of the Horsley Cup.

DELIGHTED

Thanks to goals by Tony Wharton, Anthony Ratcliffe and Steve Lowndes, the team scored an emphatic 3-0 victory over Dale Farm Northampton on 20 March. Team Manager Barry Woolley was delighted, though felt Elkes could have scored a lot more goals.

They now meet Bowyers of Trowbridge in the semifinal, to be played on a neutral ground at Pershore in Worcestershire during April.